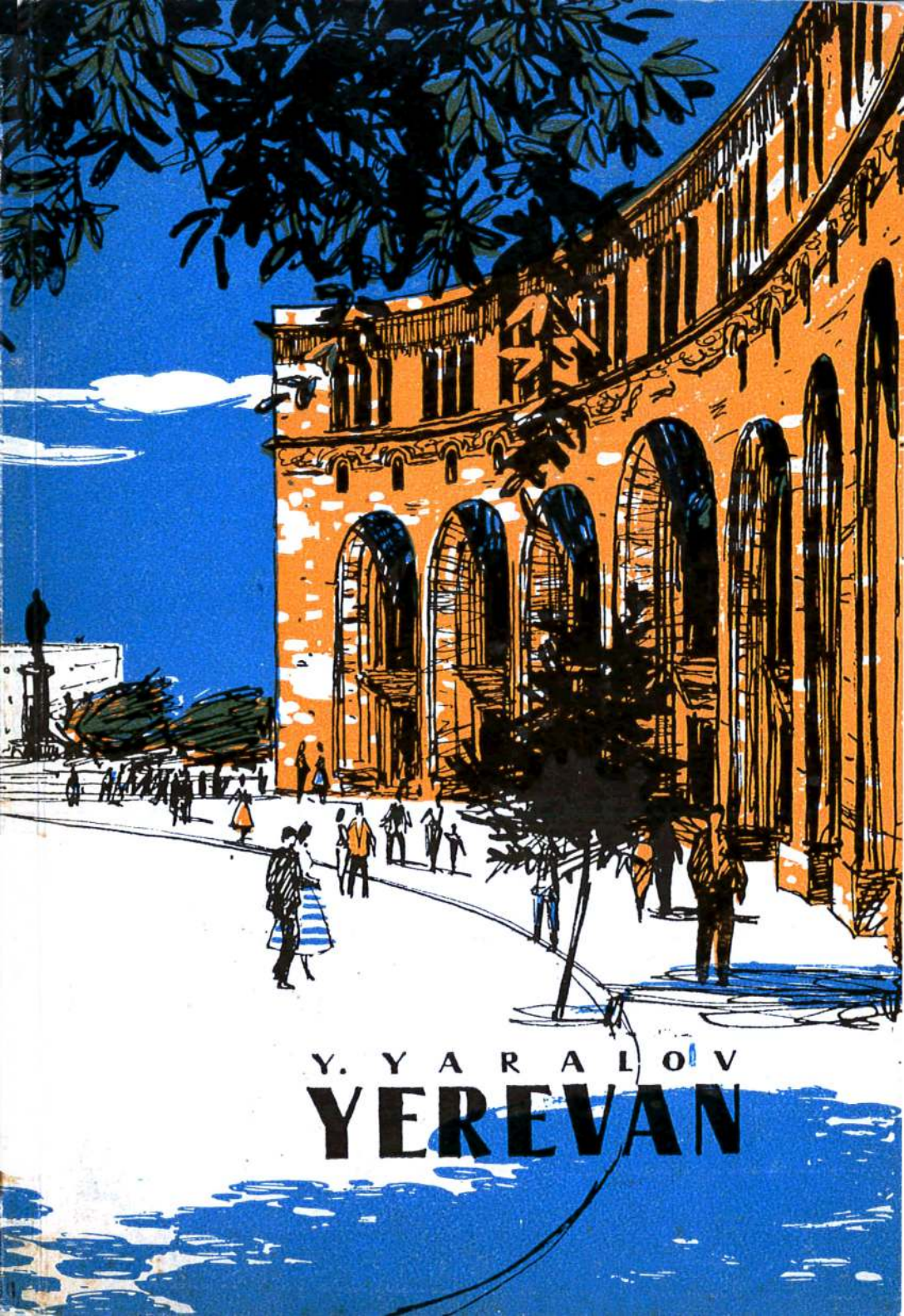
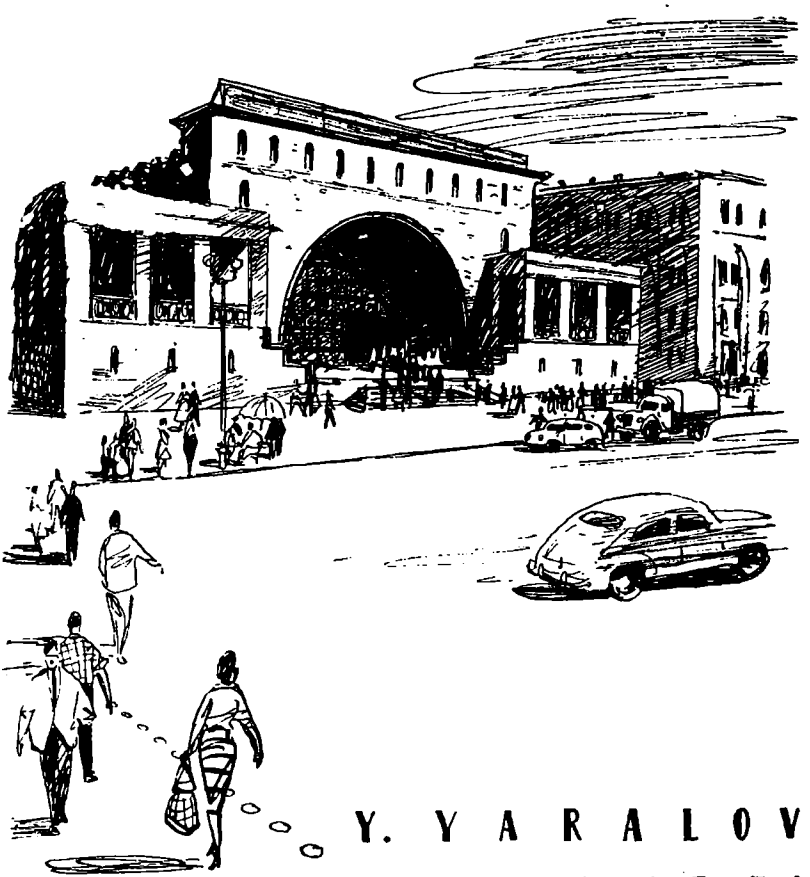


Y. YARALOV

YEREVAN



Y. YARALOV

YEREVAN

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ЕРЕВАН

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The beauty of a city depends on many factors such as colouring, relief, climate, water resources, vegetation and the characteristic materials used in its construction. As throughout Armenia, the natural conditions in Yerevan, capital of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic, are full of contrasts.

In summer the temperature rises to 40° C. in the shade, while in winter it may fall as low as 20° C. below zero. Yerevan's average temperature in summer corresponds roughly to that of Naples and Madrid, and in winter to that of Helsinki and Leningrad.

Bordering on the richly vegetated Nork plateau are the bare cliffs of Kanaker, while the proud double peak of the biblical Mt. Ararat and the characteristic quadruple peak of Aragats (Alagöz) rise sheer out of low-lying foot-hills, forming a uniquely beautiful background to the city.

The architecture of the city adds to its natural beauty and provides us with a key to its history, the hardships of the past, the grandeur of the present and indications of even better things to come.

Every city in the Land of Soviets has experienced rebirth in the years of Soviet power, but the changes that have taken place in the past forty years in Yerevan are particularly striking.

Side by side with the pink tufa of tall modern buildings one still comes across tumbledown mud huts, remnants of a past age; not far from the broad asphalt ribbon of the Stalin Prospekt lie the winding narrow streets of Kond Hill, which has now become a kind of show-place by which the young people may judge of the architecture of old Yerevan.

These contrasts are rapidly disappearing. The old is being pushed back by the new and will never return.

But before embarking on the story of how Yerevan rose out of a dusty and remote provincial town to become the splendid capital of a socialist republic one must say a few words about Armenia's history.

Armenia! A country with a history of three thousand years that has known heroic periods of resurgence and times of catastrophic defeat, a country that could once compete in greatness with ancient Rome and Parthia and that was reduced to the position of one of the forgotten provinces of Persia, a country that in the nineteenth century was on the verge of ruin and, like a phoenix from the ashes, in the twentieth year of the twentieth century was given a wonderful new lease

of life by the Party of the Bolsheviks and achieved a renaissance of the spiritual and physical forces of its industrious, proud people, who through all the difficulties of the past had retained their national identity and high cultural standards.

Only a few figures need be quoted to show the country's economic and cultural progress since the advent of Soviet power.

The output of Armenian industry rose by 55 times as compared with 1913. Up to 1921 there was not a single scientific establishment or institute of higher education in Armenia. The few learned Armenians that existed could find no application for their knowledge in their own country and were forced to seek employment beyond its borders. For example, the famous mineralogist Andreas Artsruni, a corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, spent many years abroad teaching as a professor in one of the German universities. Even problems of Armenian history and the Armenian language were studied by Armenian scholars mainly at centres of learning outside Armenia.

Before the Revolution Armenia had only 446 elementary schools and a few secondary schools. Now, besides its elementary schools, the republic has 620 semi-secondary (seven-year) and 403 secondary (ten-year) schools, 44 technical secondary schools, 12 institutes of higher education, dozens of scientific research establishments, and an Academy of Sciences. In Soviet Armenia one out of every four people is taking some form of education. To every 80 people there is one college student, while in neighbouring Turkey the proportion is only one to 923.

In 1922 the population of Armenia numbered 781,000, but at the beginning of 1957 it was 1,664,000—a twofold increase! In 1956 there were 38 births to every thousand

of the population, that is over four times more than in France, and twice as many as in Britain, the German Federal Republic, and Belgium.

While the birth rate increases in Armenia the death rate is decreasing. In 1926 the number of people aged sixty and over was 57,500, by 1939 the figure had risen to 87,400, and by 1956 to 131,500. At the present time there are in the republic nearly 3,000 people aged ninety and over. Four hundred of them are over 100.

There have been striking changes in Yerevan, one of the most ancient cities of the Soviet Union. The date of the foundation of Yerevan goes back beyond history. In cuneiform documents found at the end of the nineteenth century during excavation of the Arin Berd Mound which lies near the modern city, there is mention of a fortress erected on this spot by the Urartu king Argishti I in the eighth century B.C.

Soviet scholars, who for over ten years have been carrying out systematic excavation of the Arin Berd and Karmir Blur mounds, have discovered the remains of magnificent palaces, fortresses and residences of the Urartu settlement of Teishebaini going back to the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. There still remain traces of irrigation works which bear witness to the high level of agriculture in the age of the Urartaeans, primogenitors of the modern Armenians.

In written documents Yerevan is first mentioned at the beginning of the seventh century, when David, "Dean of Yerevan," attended the convocation of Dvinsk.

Lying on the trade routes between East and West, the city was prone to periods of great prosperity and of great decline. For a long time it remained largely horticultural in character and was known as a *gyughakaghak*, a settlement buried in orchards. But in the thirteenth century, owing to a number of causes, mainly the shifting of trade routes, economic life

awoke at the beginning of the routes leading from the Ararat plain to the passes over the Little Caucasus and Yerevan became commercially important.

After 1500 Yerevan also acquired military importance as a town on the border between two rival states, Persia and Turkey, both of which were anxious to establish themselves on the plain of Ararat. The town changed hands several times and was ruled now by Persian khans, now by Turkish pashas. More than once Yerevan was destroyed and rebuilt. Subsequently it began to acquire more and more significance not only as a frontier fortress, but as a point of distribution for the European goods brought across the Trebizond, and for Eastern goods arriving through the ports of South Persia and from India over the Eastern Transcaucasia.

According to the French traveller Tavernier, who visited Yerevan several times (first in 1632), it was "one of the best provinces of Persia." By this time the town had acquired large caravanserais and there was a water supply from the springs of the Kirkbulak. Nevertheless, as we are told by the French traveller Chardin, who visited the city in 1637, Yerevan, though it had grown considerably, remained "ugly and dirty."

In 1735, after much bloodshed, Persia finally conquered Yerevan and the Ararat plain from Turkey and Yerevan became the capital of a khanate. Fortified walls were put up along the bank of the river Hrazdan, the Sirdar's palace and several mosques were built.

At the end of the seventeenth century Russian commercial capital began to penetrate Armenia. During the Russo-Persian war of 1826-28, which ended with the defeat of Persia, General Paskevich laid siege to Yerevan and took the city on October 1, 1827. It is an interesting fact that Griboyedov's immortal comedy *Wit Works Woe* was first performed by

an amateur group of Russian officers in the hall of the Sirdar's palace in that very month. The performance was attended by the author, who was on Paskevich's staff at the time of the capture of Yerevan.

The war ended with the Treaty of Turkmanchai, in accordance with which over 40,000 Armenians were moved from the Persian provinces to the plain of Ararat. The territory captured from Persia with parts of neighbouring provinces was formed into the Armenian Province with its administrative centre in Yerevan. When the province was abolished in 1840 it became an uyezd of the Georgian-Imeretian (Tiflis) Gubernia, and in 1850 it became known as the Yerevan Gubernia.

In those days Yerevan was a typical Asiatic town with narrow crooked streets lined with low stone or mud walls. It possessed seven churches, eight mosques, twelve caravanserais and nearly nine hundred stalls. The only amenity that the tsarist government provided for the town was to have the marshy waste ground east of the fortress moat drained and made into an English garden (now known as the Park of the Twenty-Six Commissars). In 1856 a building plan for the city was approved and work was begun on the main thoroughfare which was once called Astafyevskaya Street and is now Abovyan Street.

At this time, however, the town suffered a sharp economic decline owing to the weakening of its trade connections and rapidly turned into a provincial backwater of tsarist Russia. The caravanserais and stalls grew empty and all the big merchants moved away to Tiflis. Important branches of the local craft industry (weaving, jewellery, and gun-making) fell into decline. Soon Yerevan ceased to be a fortress, being replaced by the new fortress of Alexandropol (now Leninakan) on the Russo-Turkish frontier. In 1869 the fortress of Yerevan

was officially abolished. The Sirdar's palace, an extremely interesting example of Persian architecture, fell into decay and was demolished in 1891.

In these conditions the growth of the population suffered a check. While at the time of its unification with Russia the town had had a population of about 10,000, by the end of the nineteenth century it had not risen to more than fourteen or fifteen thousand.

The tsarist official D. Mordovtsev, who visited the town in this period and called it a "fiery mud oven," described it as follows: "Mud houses with flat mud roofs, mud streets, mud squares, and finally, mud environs—nothing but mud. . . ." Squeezed into this huddle of mud huts were a few two-storey houses of the local gentry. About this period the town Duma calculated that "in various parts of the town and at the bazaar 600 cartloads of garbage and filth could be collected."

In 1903 the construction of a railway linking Yerevan with Tiflis (now Tbilisi) instilled some life into the development of crafts and industry, but the matter did not get beyond the building of a small distillery and two or three dozen craft enterprises employing no more than 600 workers in all.

Apart from an out-patients clinic the town had only one hospital with 35 beds, two private clinics and about a dozen schools. There was a water main but no sanitation, five baths, two small electric power stations and a horse-drawn tramway. The wonderful mineral water of the region (the second best in Europe) was available only through a few pumps standing in pools of mud. Only a tenth of the streets and squares were paved. In 1914 the population did not exceed 30,000.

The architecture of Yerevan before the Revolution was very unattractive. A wretched road, more like a cart-track, without even a name led through waste land and allotments from the

railway station to the centre of the town. The main street, Astafyevskaya, flanked with small brick houses, ran from the English Garden to the Kanaker highroad on the outskirts. This was the town's sole outlet in the direction of Tiflis. Most of the streets branching off Astafyevskaya were not even made up and their mud houses were surrounded by high windowless walls. The best hotel in the town was the two-storey London Hotel, which still remains today, as though for comparison, in the courtyard of the huge Sevan Hotel. Churches and mosques were scattered about among the chaotic muddle of buildings. The sites of what are now Lenin and Shahumyan squares were more or less waste ground with perhaps a few mud huts standing on them. The streets were so narrow that even two donkeys could not pass when loaded with bales. The oldest inhabitants still remember how the town used to end not far from what is now the Park of the Twenty-Six Commissars. Beyond this there were fields, allotments and marshes. Buffalo carts, camel caravans, and an occasional two-horse carriage were the main means of transport.

Such was Yerevan—an uncared-for provincial town of the Russian Empire.

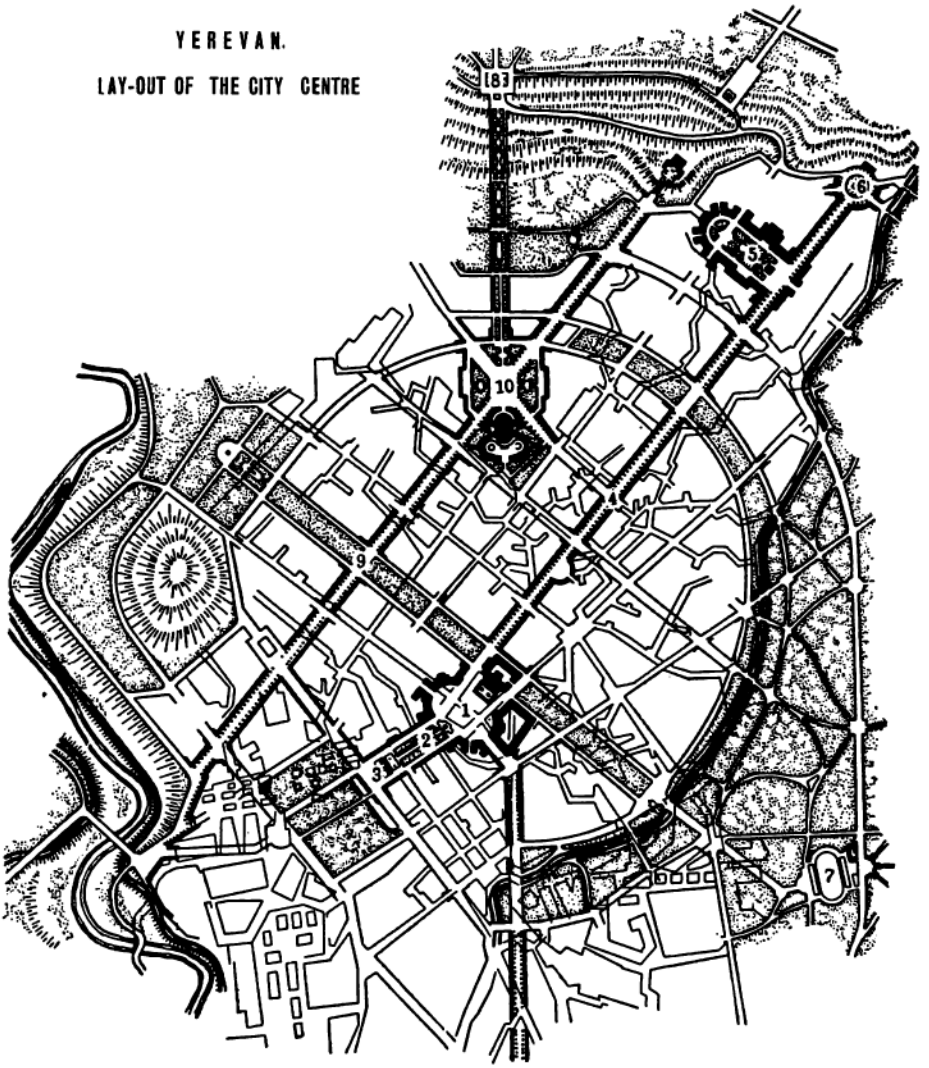
The war of 1914-17 and the period of rule of the bourgeois nationalist *dashnaks*, who held power from 1918 to 1920, reduced the town to utter ruin. Houses crumbled into decay. The miserable public services and industry were destroyed.

On November 29, 1920, Armenia joined the great family of Soviet peoples. For the republic and its capital a new era had arrived.

During the years of Soviet power Yerevan has been converted into a powerful industrial city. Its example shows in a striking manner what vital forces and inexhaustible reserves for rapid development the socialist system of economy

YEREVAN.

LAY-OUT OF THE CITY CENTRE



1. Lenin Square; 2. Shahumyan Boulevard; 3. Shahumyan Monument; 4. Abovyan Street; 5. Student Town; 6. Statue of Abovyan; 7. Stadium; 8. Victory Monument; 9. Stalin Prospekt; 10. Opera House

possesses, based as it is on public ownership and developing in accordance with a unified state plan.

As has already been said, Yerevan is bounded on the east by the Nork plateau, which is now dotted with summer cottages. In the south the mountain slopes give way to a plain, above which towers Ararat. In the north are the Kanaker and Arabkir hills, which are now rapidly being built over. The deep picturesque canyon of the Hrazdan River, now flanked with roads, and the Dalma vineyards border the city on the west. In the north-west rises the characteristic silhouette of Aragats.

This city lying in an almost complete amphitheatre of mountains (the arena is approximately 1,000 metres above sea level, much higher than either Mineralniye Vody or Karlovy Vary) has been replanned in a way that spreads it out over the neighbouring hills.

The plan of the reconstruction of Yerevan that was worked out in 1924 by Academician of Architecture Alexander Tamanyan has provided the basis for this reborn city. According to this plan the architectural core of the city is the Oktyabrsky Prospekt leading from the station to Lenin Square and onward through Theatre Square till it reaches the Kanaker plateau. The centre of the whole plan is Lenin Square which provides the focal point for all the main arteries of the city. Yerevan is ringed with orchards, parks, and garden squares. That is the basic outline of Tamanyan's architectural design.

The plan provided for a growth of population up to 170,000, when the total population was sixty to seventy thousand. The idea was that the city should be surrounded by a green belt. But life upset all preliminary calculations. Yerevan grew at a feverish pace. Even in 1935 the population exceeded the planned figure. In 1936 the plan was revised while pre-

Railway station (architect E. Tigranyan)

serving the basic principles laid down by Tamanyan. According to the new plan the expansion of the city was directed westwards, taking in the Nork slopes and the Kanaker, Avan, Arabkir and Jurvezh plateaus. Neighbouring villages were also included in the plan.

In reconstructing the city the planners made it their aim to achieve the maximum of convenience for the inhabitants in their home life, work and recreation. To do so it was necessary to get rid of the overcrowdedness of the old town with its lack of planning and proper roads, to facilitate the planned expansion of the town in the direction of the healthiest parts of the surrounding neighbourhood, and to distribute industry rationally with regard to residential districts. Another important factor was the desire to make the appearance of the city beautiful and memorable.

In Soviet times Yerevan has acquired far more housing than it possessed before the Revolution. In place of the primitively equipped one- and two-storey buildings, the houses that are now going up are of three to four storeys, brick- or stone-built, and provided with all modern conveniences. Whole blocks and districts are built according to plan. For instance, there are three large areas—the Lenin, Shahumyan and Twenty-Six Commissars districts—where the building and the lay-out are planned from start to finish.

The city now has good roads leading out of it in many directions. Dust has been almost eliminated by large-scale afforestation of the surrounding hills. Well-built settlements, factories and plants lie on the outskirts. The city's expansion has been guided towards the healthy elevated parts of the locality. Industry is concentrated in the southern, western and northern parts.

Residential building on Oktyabrsky Prospekt
(architect O. Akopyan)

When he visited Yerevan in 1928, the great Russian writer Maxim Gorky wrote: "Yes, everywhere, at all points in the land of the Union of Soviets bold experiments of great importance are being made, a new life is being built. This is the first thing that strikes you when you arrive in Yerevan.

"This grey stone city against the background of the grim mass of silver-headed Ararat with its cap of reddish clouds, this city from a distance gave me the impression of something imprisoned in a cage of scaffolding, on which the ant-like figures of the builders were moulding buildings almost as if they had scooped them straight out of the rocky mass of the biblical mountain."

The city still reminds one of a gigantic construction site, except that instead of scaffolding one now sees tower cranes. One can hear the hammering of the workers' pneumatic drills and the whine of stone-cutters and stone-polishing machines. Slabs of basalt, tufa, and marble are seen everywhere.

It is not for nothing that the Armenians call their country "Hayastan-Qarastan" (Armenia—land of rock). Marble, onyx, tufa, basalt and other types of stone with varying quality and colour lie literally "ready to hand." Armenia's modern architects have performed an important service in reviving ancient traditions of working stone and using its plastic and colour qualities. The immortal traditions of ancient Armenian architecture are embodied in the new edifices.

Let us walk through the streets of this ancient yet very young city and acquaint ourselves with its squares and streets, its gardens and parks, its architecture and sculpture, and we shall understand the well-deserved pride that the people of Yerevan take in their city and their constant desire to improve it and make it more beautiful.

As had been said already, the heart of Yerevan is Lenin Square.

City squares can take shape in various ways. We know of squares that have grown up through a long history and have retained their unity and wholeness in spite of the differences in the style of their buildings. St. Mark's Square in Venice and the Palace Square in Leningrad are two examples of this type.

There are also squares built in a single style, sometimes by a single architect, according to a single plan (the Place des Vosges in Paris, for example, built by Claude De Chastillon in 1604-12, or Lomonosov Square and Rossi Street in Leningrad, built by Rossi all as one unit).

Finally, there are squares where all the buildings are based on a single architectural device. In such cases each architect takes up and develops the theme used by his predecessors (for example, the Louvre and the Tuileries in Paris, the Annunziata Square in Florence).

Lenin Square in Yerevan was created by the third method. In each new building the architects have made creative use of the devices employed by their predecessors on earlier structures.

Lenin Square is oval in shape with a trapezoid base and reminds one of St. Paul's Square in Rome. But whereas the latter is partly enclosed by a quadruple colonnade, Lenin Square is enclosed in buildings and has quite a different architectural aspect.

The south-east side of Lenin Square is occupied by Government House and Communications House. On the west there is a monument to Lenin, on either side of which lie the House of Unions and a hotel. Opposite Government House are the offices of the Economic Council of Armenia.

The monument to Lenin, planned by architects N. Paremuzova and L. Vartanov, stands on the edge of the square

Monument to Lenin in Lenin Square (architects N. Paremuzova and L. Vartanov, sculptor S. Merkurov)

at the top of the Shahumyan Boulevard. Part of it consists of a stand to hold 300 people. The whole edifice is built on a raised platform with steps leading up to it on four sides. The stands are made of polished Pambak granite and surrounded with a low barrier, whose cornices are finely moulded in basalt. Its large details give the monument an architectural significance that belies its size (the statue and pedestal together are only fourteen metres high).

The figure of Lenin, carved by People's Artist of the U.S.S.R. S. Merkurov is one of the best sculptures of Lenin in the Soviet Union. The impression it gives is of Lenin both as a thinker and leader. The brief gesture of the left hand and the right hand holding a book, the broad folds of the clothes, the moulding of the head, the lightness of the movement in the whole figure are very striking. In the early hours of the morning against the background of mighty Ararat it makes a particularly whole and organic impression.

One of the main buildings in Lenin Square is Government House, built by A. Tamanyan in 1926-41. If Lenin Square defines what one might call the whole "architectural physiognomy" of the city, Government House defines the artistic lay-out, composition and overall conception of the whole square. It is designed as part of a grandiose assembly, yet it does not lose its significance as the building of the central government institution.

Looked at from above the building has the shape of an irregular pentagon, one side of which following the oval of the square forms the central part of the building. The pink Kolageran trachyte of which it is built glows iridescently in the rays of the southern sun.

The main façade is designed in large clear sections. In the centre of the building there are five huge arches supported by massive quadruple columns. The columns have no clas-

sical tapering at the top and no bases and are joined with a single common capital, a device characteristic of ancient Armenian architecture. Over the arcade there is a loggia running the whole length of the façade.

The side façades are decorated with an original kind of order designed by Tamanyan. It consists of half-columns flanking broad pilasters with triangular arch-topped niches. The upper storey is designed with an unbroken row of arches on slender columns. The remaining façades are decorated with pilasters of simpler design.

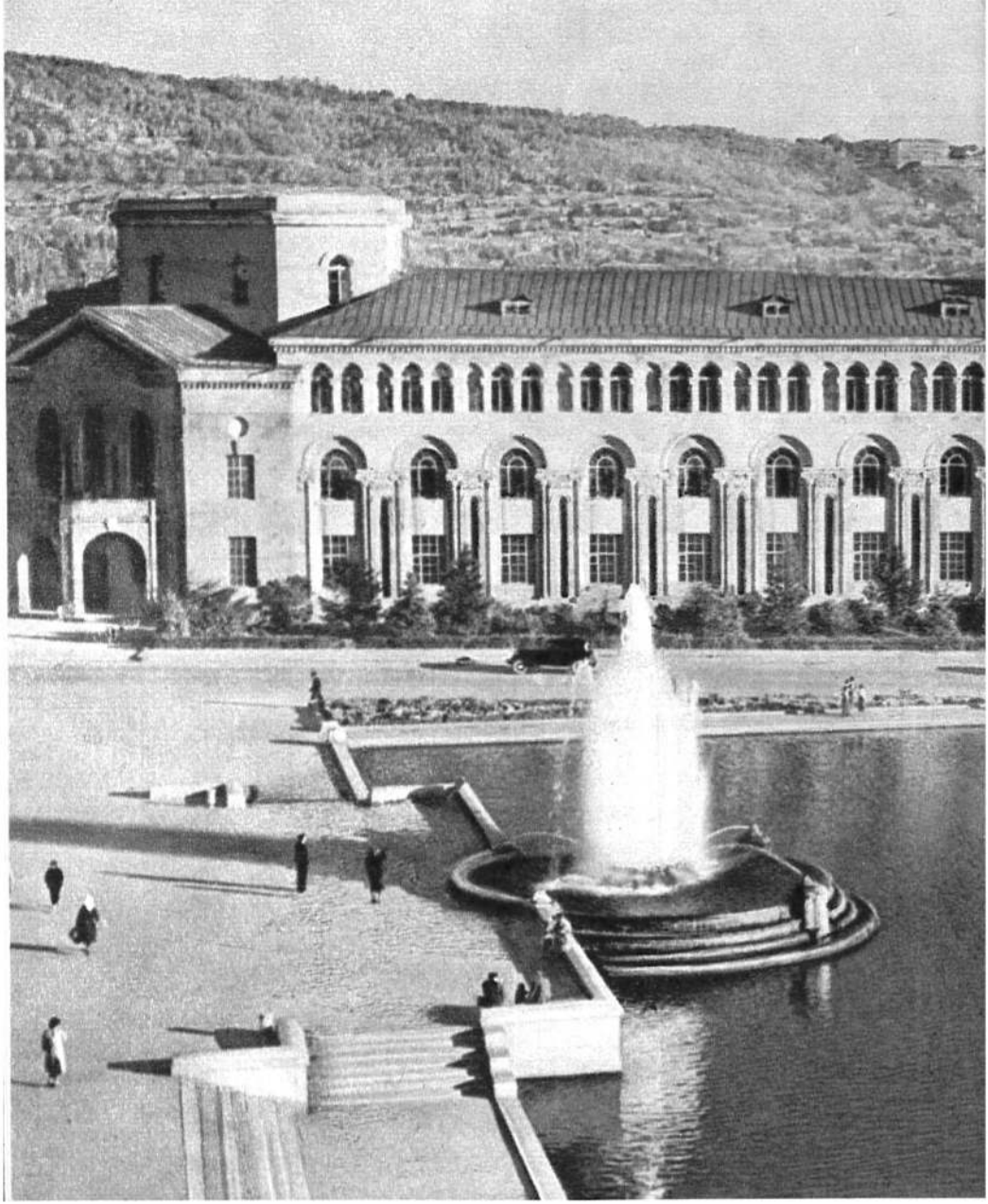
Talent and a profound study of the heritage of ancient Armenian architecture gave Tamanyan excellent material for original composition and made his work genuinely national in character.

Armenia's Government House marks an important stage in the history of the new, socialist architecture. Its northern section houses the Supreme Soviet of the Republic (architect G. Tamanyan).

The architects who went on with the building of the square, having accepted Tamanyan's effectively handled arch as its basic architectural theme, rightly decided that automatic application of the features of the first building to the new buildings would deprive the latter of the individuality that should arise naturally from their function.

The offices of the Economic Council (architects S. Safaryan, assisted by R. Israelyan and V. Arevshatyan) stands opposite Government House. The position of this building in the city's central square and its proximity to Government House dictated a certain conformity with the latter in composition, sectional rhythm and proportion.

The central section of the building is decorated with the same massive quadruple columns as Government House, but has seven spans instead of five. The arches of the building



Government House, Lenin Square (architect A. Tamanyan)

Central Section of Government House

are covered with flat carving, the pattern of which matches the light design of the frames of the first-floor windows. The shape of the tower should also be noted. Thus, though retaining its individuality, the building bears a close compositional resemblance to Government House.

The next building in the square is the radically reconstructed building of the House of Culture (architect M. Grigoryan, assisted by E. Sarapyan). The old building constructed of black tufa with orange detail was at odds with the general design of the square in both its proportions and colour. Now a grandiose loggia with a huge projecting central arch has

Building of the Supreme Soviet of the Armenian Republic, Government House (architect G. Tamanyan)

Hall of the Supreme Soviet, Government House

The Armenian Economic Council is seen in the centre, Lenin Square (architect S. Safaryan)

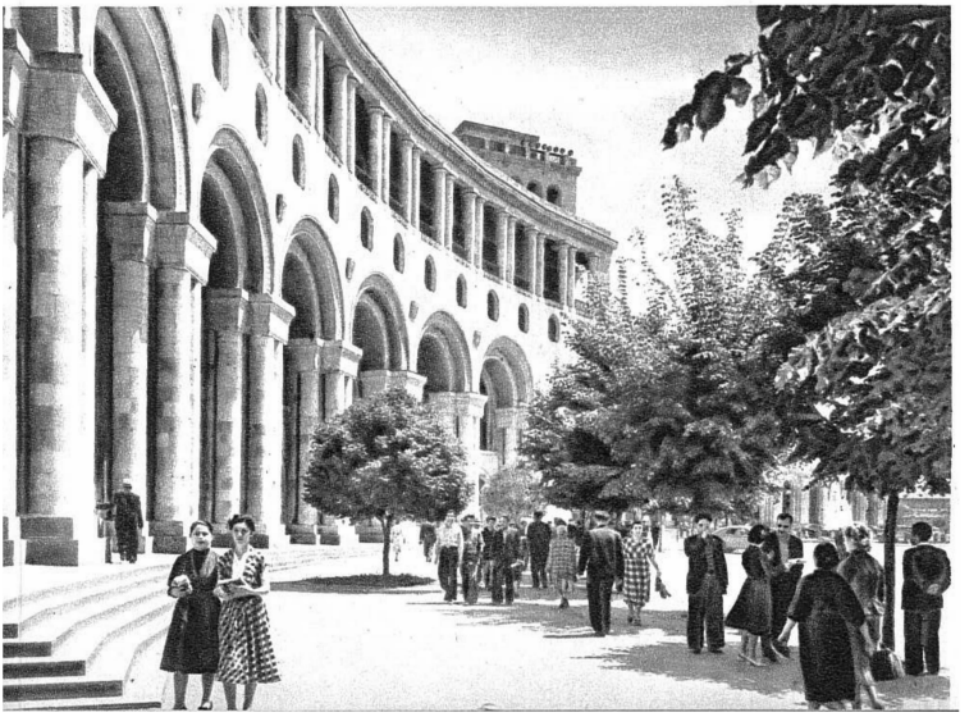
been built on to the face of the building. In front of this there is a large pond with fountains.

In the House of Culture is the State Art Gallery of Armenia and the State Historical Museum. Yerevan has five other museums besides these.

The State Art Gallery possesses nearly thirteen thousand exhibits, although owing to restricted space only 3,500 of them are on show. They include paintings, sculptures, drawings and works of applied art. The gallery has three large sections, Armenian, Russian and West-European art. There is also a Chinese section. The gallery's fund contains works of Iranian, Greek and Egyptian art.

The main section is the Armenian, where there is an extensive collection of works by artists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—A. Bashinjagyan, S. Surenyan, E. Ta-

Central section of the Economic Council



Loggia of the House of Culture, Lenin Square (architect M. Grigoryan, assisted by E. Sarapyan)

tevosyan, M. Saryan, F. Terlemezyan, S. Agajanyan, S. Arakelyan, and others. There are also paintings by Armenians living abroad: Edgar Shahin (Paris), Shiltyan (Milan), and Zakar Zakaryan (France).

In the Russian section there are works by V. Serov, I. Repin, V. Surikov, V. Perov, I. Kramskoi, I. Shishkin, I. Levitan, K. Korovin, I. Argunov, F. Rokotov, D. Levitsky, S. Shchedrin, A. Venetsianov, V. Tropinin, K. Bryullov, and others. The pride of the gallery is a collection of the splendid marine painter I. Aivazovsky. Quite recently forty new pictures by this master were purchased from the Parisian collector Djindjian.

House of Unions, Lenin Square (architects M. Grigoryan and E. Sarapyan)

Hotel, Lenin Square (architects M. Grigoryan and E. Sarapyan). Note Lenin Monument and House of Unions in the background

In the West-European section we find works representing Italy—J. Bassano, J. Tintoretto, F. Guardi, A. Canova; Flanders—P. Rubens and A. Vandyke; France—G. Courbet, T. Rousseau, Diaz de la Peña, J. Fragonard, and others. It is interesting to note that the Armenian gallery possesses the largest collection in the U.S.S.R. of works by the Rumanian painters N. Grigorescu, T. Aman, and others.

In recent years the west side of the square has been flanked with a hotel and the building of the House of Unions. Here, too, is the reconstructed House of Communications. All three buildings were designed by architects M. Grigoryan and E. Sarapyan.

They are given unity by the rhythm of their arcades, which unlike the other buildings in the square, have no columns and are almost entirely covered with carving.

Taken as a whole, Lenin Square can justly be described as one of the most beautiful in the world.

Now let us inspect the main thoroughfares of the city. The most convenient way of reaching the main street—the broad Stalin Prospekt—from Lenin Square is to walk along Amiryan Street, the left side of which is lined with buildings, mostly flats, erected in the past five years.

Noteworthy among them is a school by architect G. Agababyan, which has become in effect the centre of the whole design of the street. It has a five-span arcade extending to the second and third floors and a triangular fronton. Skilfully etched details, such as the cornice, the capitals, pilasters, the archivolts of the windows, and the frame of the central door, give the building a refined and severe beauty. In 1957 a statue to the outstanding Armenian poet Yegishe Charents was erected in front of the building.

If on leaving Amiryan Street one goes down Stalin Prospekt, one will notice on the left-hand side the multi-coloured tiled

School in Amiryan Street (architect G. Agababyan)

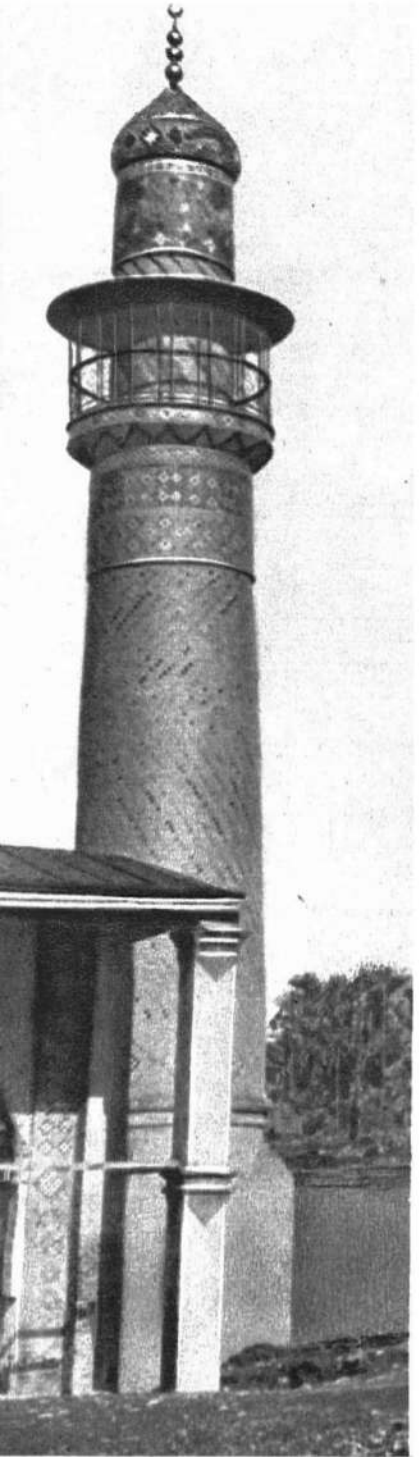
cupola and minaret of a mosque built in 1776. At present the mosque houses the Yerevan Municipal Museum containing five thousand exhibits dealing with the history of the city.

Opposite the museum is the city's covered market (architect G. Agababyan, engineer A. Arakelyan), which impresses one with its large entrance arch, adorned with a huge bronzed panel. The design of the panel consists of various animals and plants woven into a delicate lace-like background. The hall gives the visitor a fine impression of spaciousness. Light ferro-concrete arches carrying the rafters support smaller semi-circular arches, which in their turn hold up the vaults over the windows. The general effect is that of tracery work and is a great adornment to the interior of the building.

Residential buildings on Stalin Prospekt

As we go down Stalin Prospekt we reach the cross-roads where it joins Krasnoarmeiskaya Street. Note here the two large blocks of flats. Further on the avenue comes out into a street along the bank of the River Hrazdan. As little as five or six years ago the river banks were cluttered with wretched hovels of pre-revolutionary times. Now the banks of the Hrazdan are clad in basalt and on both sides there are highways with mineral water kiosks in niches, drinking fountains and benches placed at regular intervals along them. Above there is a children's railway with a station and tunnel.

Here, too, are the buildings of the Yerevan hydropower station, built in 1923 by A. Tamanyan. It was in this building, while acquiring the basic elements of his style, that



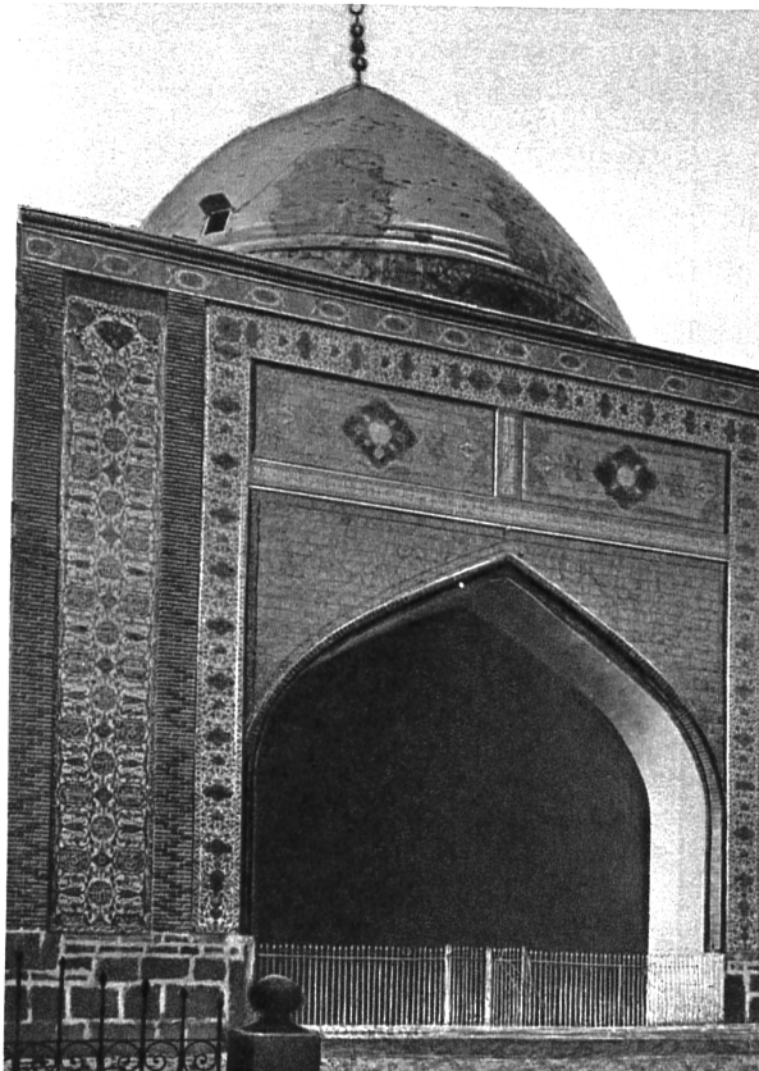
Minaret of the Heyy Mosque
←

Tamanyan made his first attempt to master the heritage of the past. The rough-hewn basalt of the walls and the great horseshoe-shaped arches of the generator shed are in keeping with the pillar-like basalt of the gorge and the rushing river itself.

Further downstream the river is spanned by an aqueduct, completed in 1946 by engineer G. Yegiyan and architect R. Israelyan, and also by a bridge. Built in 1945 (engineer S. Hovnanyan, architects A. Mamijanyan, and A. Asatryan) Victory Bridge with its three spans across the noisy Hrazdan swirling far below is the focal point of the interesting architecture of the river banks. To facilitate construction S. Hovnanyan, who was in charge of the engineering side of the work, mounted each span on arches. The bridge is embellished with decorative iron-cast rails and stone-column lamps. Both the bridge and the aqueduct are purely utilitarian structures. But the bridge forms the continuation of the avenue and as

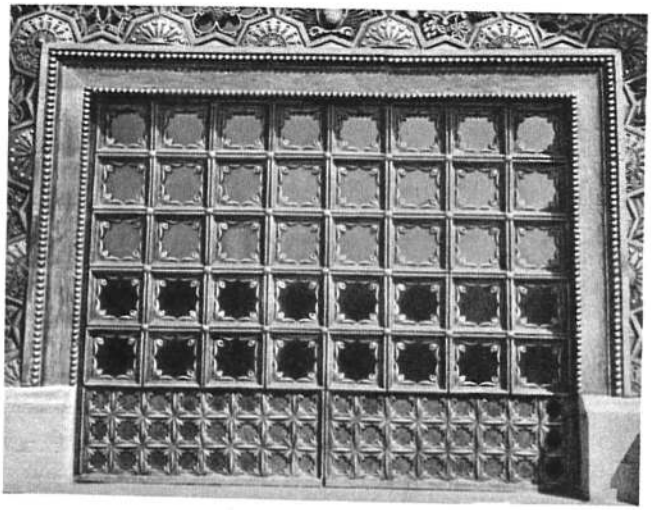
Central section of the Heyy Mosque
→

such required special architectural design. The more modest structure of the aqueduct has no significance in the architecture of the town, nor any particular aesthetic function. With this in mind the architects have subordinated this structure to that of the main bridge. The aqueduct is built of rough-hewn basalt. It is a massive structure and consists of five arches, three large ones in the centre and two smaller ones at each



Covered market, Stalin Prospekt (architect G. Agababyan; engineer A. Arakelyan)

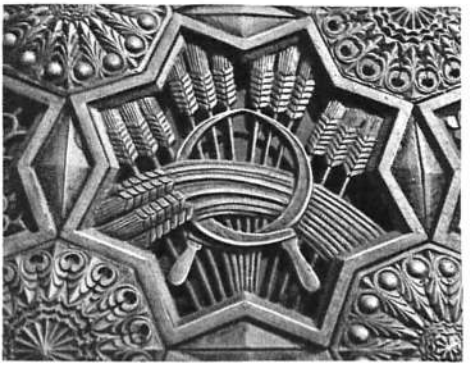
Main entrance to the market →



Bronzed panel of the market

Fragments of the panel

Fragments of the panel



Central hall of the market

Printing House and City Soviet, Krasnoarmeiskaya Street (architect Z. Bakhshinyan)

end, which lend it greater support from the banks. A few decorative elements such as a cornice and flat archivolts over the arches give it an effective finish.

On the steep left bank of the river are the wine cellars of the Ararat Trust (architect R. Israelyan), a large section of which was built in 1938 and which is now being extended. A feature of this building is the almost complete absence of doors and windows on the outside; entry can only be obtained from the grounds of the distillery.

The architect has shown great skill in conforming to the complex relief of the locality. In a direct line with the axis of the bridge is the central building with its three large arches, in the niches of which stand finely carved stone wine jars under projecting porticos. The rest of the buildings are decorated with pilasters and capitals of various designs. A tower

now under construction forms a link between the distilling sheds and the management offices. Part of the central building stands higher than the rest and here there is a tasters' hall with a magnificent view of Ararat. In front of the hall there is a loggia with an arcade.

One of the cellar buildings stands on the site of the old Sirdar's palace, where, as we have already mentioned, the comedy *Wit Works Woe* was first performed. This fact is recorded in an inscription carved on the cellar wall.

Facing the wine cellars there is another large building of the Ararat Trust, its cognac distillery, built in 1953 by architect O. Markaryan. The main section of the building is set on a massive foundation. The basic element of its decoration is the arches which line the main façade and go to make up the loggia at the entrance through the rear façade.

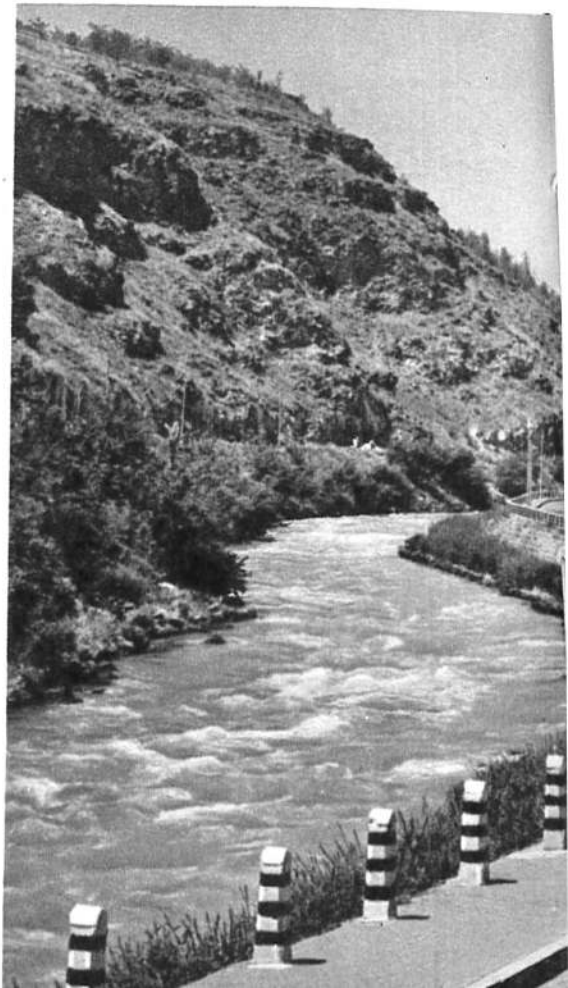
On the whole the architecture on the banks of the Hrazdan is one of the most memorable features of the city.

If we return along Stalin Prospekt and go further up it, we shall reach the State Opera House named after the outstanding Armenian composer A. Spendiaryan (architect A. Tamanyan).

The originality of this design lies in joining two theatres, a winter one and a summer one (the summer theatre has lately been converted into a concert hall), in one building with only one backstage space. This necessitated absolute symmetry of composition.

From the huge ellipsis of the plan rises the first large volume. On this are built the smaller volumes of the halls culminating in their common backstage. This gradual diminution of volumes gives the building a majestic appearance. Its long sides are joined by rectangular blocks housing subsidiary rooms, which are linked together by triple-span arches. The lower volume is faced with blue-grey rough-hewn granite and vertical pilasters, the upper is girdled with a colonnaded terrace.

Old Yerevan in the Hrazdan Gorge



Highway through Hrazdan Gorge →

From the vestibule one proceeds to a large cloak-room, from which marble staircases lead up to the main foyer with double-tier windows. From the richly decorated foyer several doors lead into the large and handsome auditorium built in the shape of an amphitheatre and seating 1,260 people.

The other end of the building is taken up by a concert hall seating 1,400, designed by G. Tamanyan, son of the academician, who completed all the work begun by his father after his death. The concert hall is built on the same principle as the opera house, but its stage is considerably smaller.

In recent years fine shady gardens have grown up round the theatre, providing it with a kind of open-air foyer.

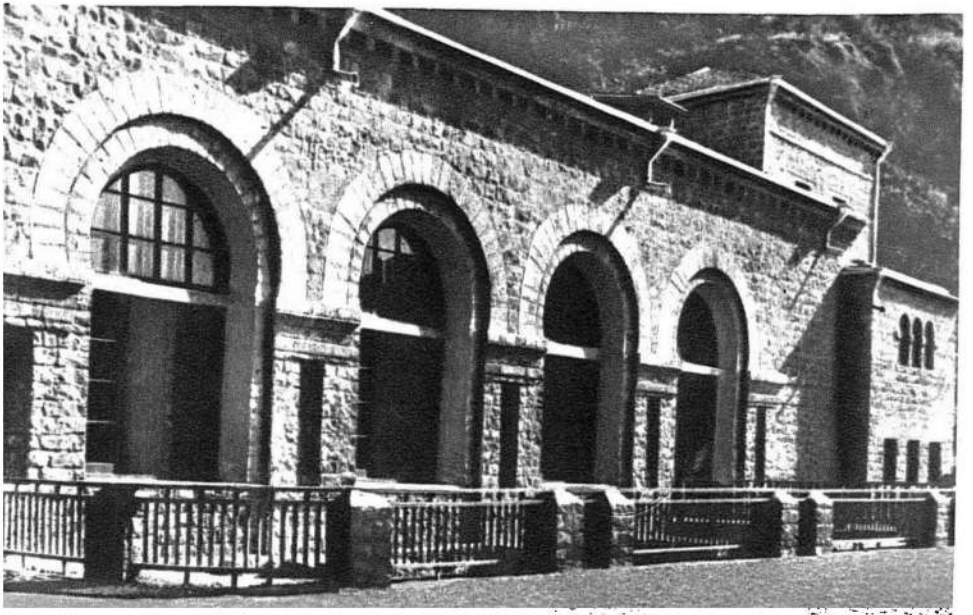
Besides the opera house there are nine other theatres in the city, including the Armenian Sundukyan Drama Theatre, and the Russian Stanislavsky Drama Theatre. In addition the city has three concert halls and a circus.

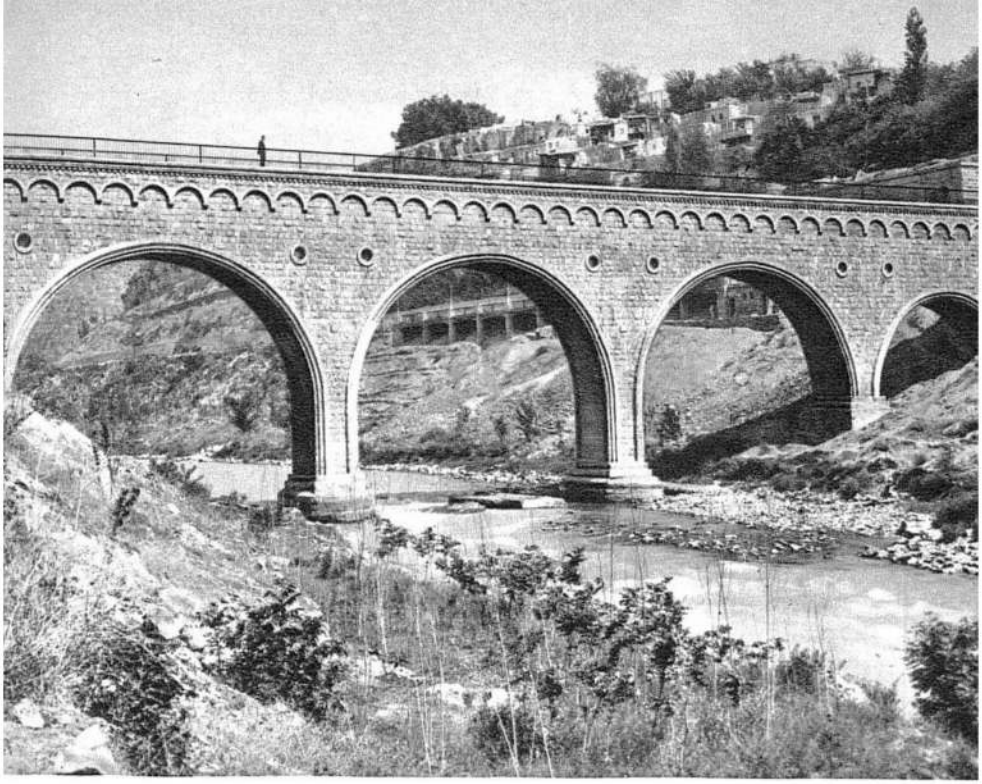
Further up Stalin Prospekt, on the hill at the corner of Kirov Street, is the new building of the Matenadaran, the State Depository of Ancient Documents (architect M. Grigoryan), now almost completed. This is a unique scientific institution, of which not only Armenia but the whole Soviet Union is justly proud.

At present the Matenadaran is housed in the Myasnikyan Public Library (Teryan Street).

The Matenadaran is one of the oldest and richest libraries in the world. It contains invaluable materials on the history of Armenia and the Middle East and on many branches of science and art. It has a collection of unique manuscripts written by the Armenian *griches* (scribes), who scattered all

Yerevan Hydro-Electric Station. The generator shed (architect A. Tamanyan)

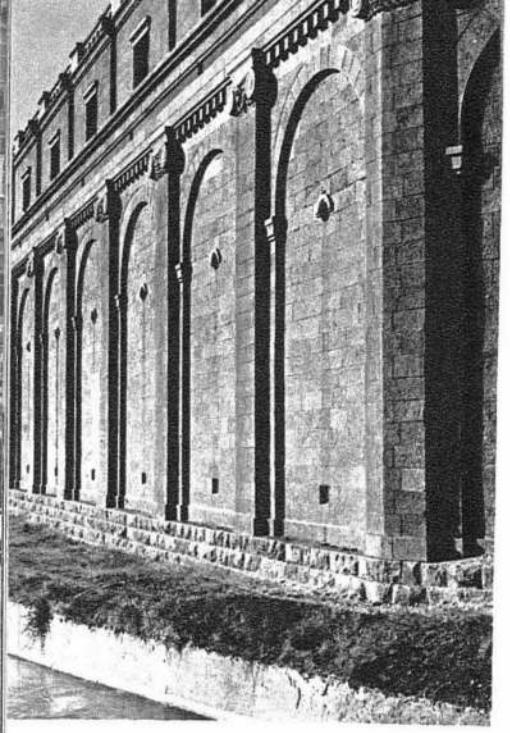




Aqueduct (engineer G. Yegiyan, architect R. Israelyan)

over the world to escape from foreign invaders. The manuscripts preserved here were written in Rome, Livorno, Venice, Constantinople, Jerusalem, Alexandria, Isfahan, Basra, Bombay, Calcutta, Lvov, and even the Philippine Islands.

At the present time the Matenadaran possesses over ten thousand complete manuscripts in Armenian, Georgian, Greek, Arabic, Hindi, Iranian, Uzbek, Azerbaijanian, and other languages, over 3,500 fragments and not less than 200,000 documents. The basic value of the Matenadaran lies in its manuscript books on parchment and paper, the works of alchem-

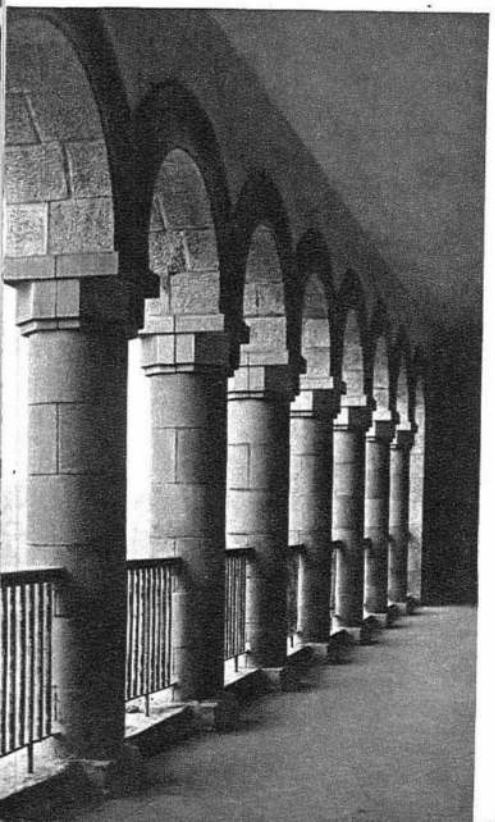


Ararat wine cellars. Fragment

ists, mathematicians, astronomers, cosmographers, artists, and composers, from 500 A. D. onwards.

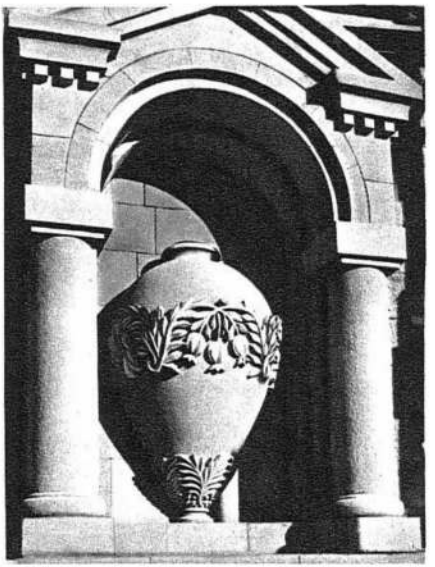
Above the Matenadaran, on the brow of the Kanaker plateau, in Victory Park stands the Victory Memorial, visible from many points in the city. With its 16.5-metre sculpture of Stalin by R. Israelyan and S. Merkurov, it is fifty metres high. In the pedestal under the statue there is to be a museum. The detail of the pedestal (gutters, flagstaffs, and door) designed by R. Israelyan and carved by stonemasons in traditional Armenian style is of considerable interest.

From the Matenadaran one may proceed to Moskovskaya Street, at the end of which stands a building with an attractive triple arch. On climbing the stone steps in front of the



Ararat wine cellars. Central loggia

Decorative wine jug



Victory Bridge (engineer S. Hovnanyan, architects A. Asatryan and A. Mamijanyan). The Ararat wine cellars are seen in the background (architect R. Israelyan)

Cognac distillery (architect O. Markaryan)

Rear façade of the distillery

Stalin Prospekt. A view from the Kanaker plateau
The State Opera House is seen on the left

building one finds oneself in the museum of Hovhannes Tumanyan, one of Armenia's greatest classical writers. It was opened in 1953 on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of Tumanyan's death. The museum contains a rich collection of materials, the poet's personal belongings and papers dealing with his life and work, his personal library (over a thousand volumes), his archives and a collection of photographs.

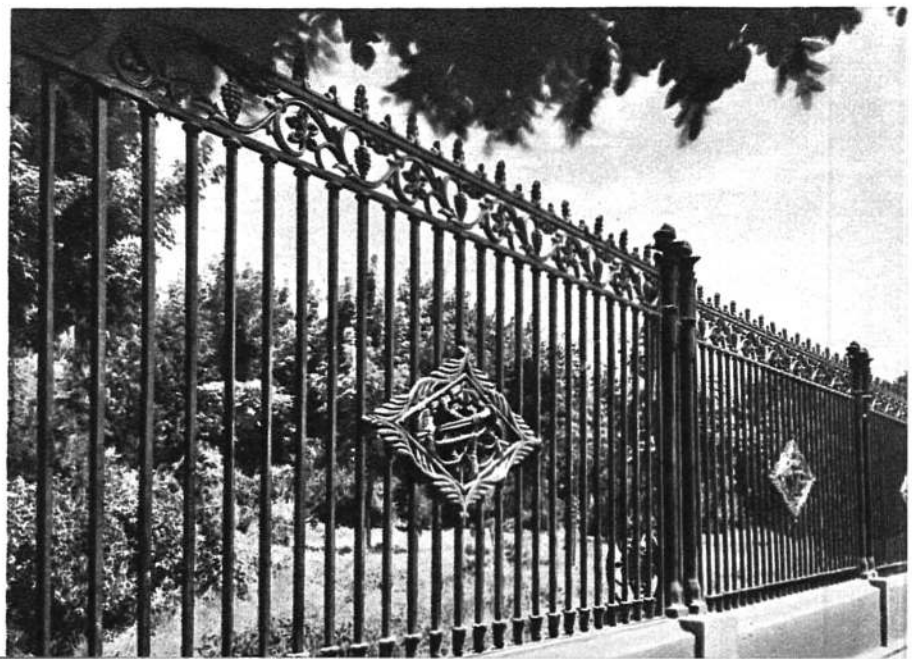
From the Tumanyan museum we return to the Opera House Square. From here we can proceed down Barekamutyun Street.

Concert hall in the State Opera House (architect G. Tamanyan)

Main entrance hall of the State Opera House

State Opera House (architect A. Tamanyan), Stalin Prospekt

Railings near the State Opera House (architect N. Zargaryan)



Begun at the end of the last war, it is now a well-built thoroughfare lined with trees. It leads to the neighbouring hills, where new districts are being rapidly developed.

In Barekamutyun Street there are three large buildings—the Supreme Soviet of the Republic (architect M. Grigoryan), the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of the Armenian Republic (architect S. Safaryan) and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia (architect M. Grigoryan).

A broad flight of steps leads up to the main entrance of the Central Committee building. The six-columned portico rises almost flush with the façade and the side sections are decorated with pilasters. The building is made of yellow tufa, which glitters in the scorching rays of the Armenian sun. The building of the Supreme Soviet is constructed of the same material. Its central section includes a skilfully placed arch.

Residential buildings on Stalin Prospekt (architect M. Grigoryan)

Victory Monument seen from Stalin Prospekt (architect R. Israelyan and sculptor S. Merkurov)

A considerable part of the interior is taken up by a large conference hall. The building of the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences has a multi-columned portico extending the whole length of its façade. This austere façade is quite in keeping with its function as a headquarters of scientific thought.

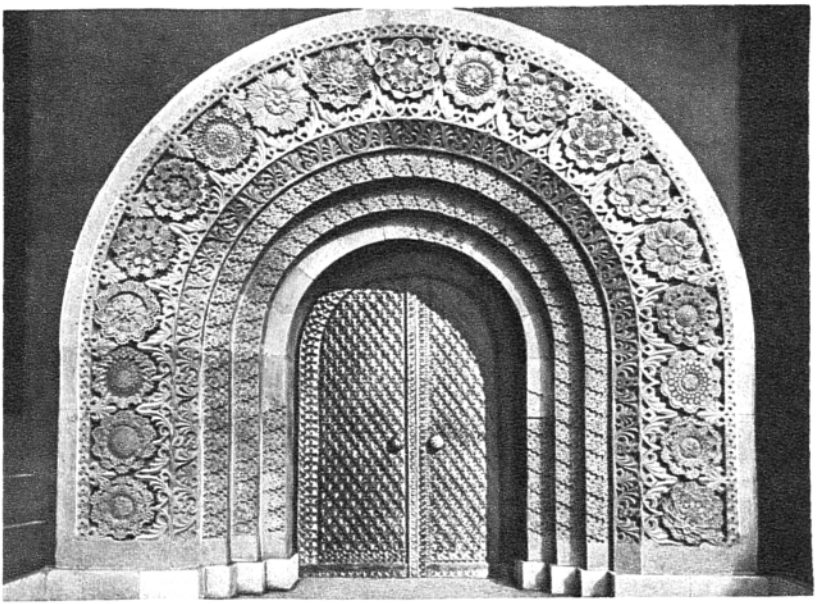
A feature of Barekamutyun Street is that it is almost entirely made up of small dwelling-houses, which give it an intimate character in spite of its few large buildings. Noteworthy among its other buildings is a school (architect R. Grigoryan), which stands in an elevated position. Its central section is decorated with an arcade on pilasters, under which there are carved reliefs.

Victory Monument

Barekamutyun Street climbs on to the plateau and runs as far as a circular cross-roads. Kievskaya Street runs down to the left forming an avenue of building sites. Here another fine architectural grouping is being created. Even now the large blocks of flats on the left-hand side (architects G. Tamanyan, F. Darbinyan, F. Mayeh-Tagesyan, and A. Shakhsuvaryan) afford some idea of the character of its architecture.

Kievskaya Street ends in a huge bridge spanning the Hrazdan gorge (architects V. Pinajyan, N. Slavinsky, G. Agababyan). This is one of the biggest single-span bridges in Europe, the actual span being 110 metres, the total length 364 metres, the width 26 metres, and the height at the centre 58.3 metres. It is a much larger structure than Victory Bridge.

Victory Monument. The portal (architect R. Israelyan)

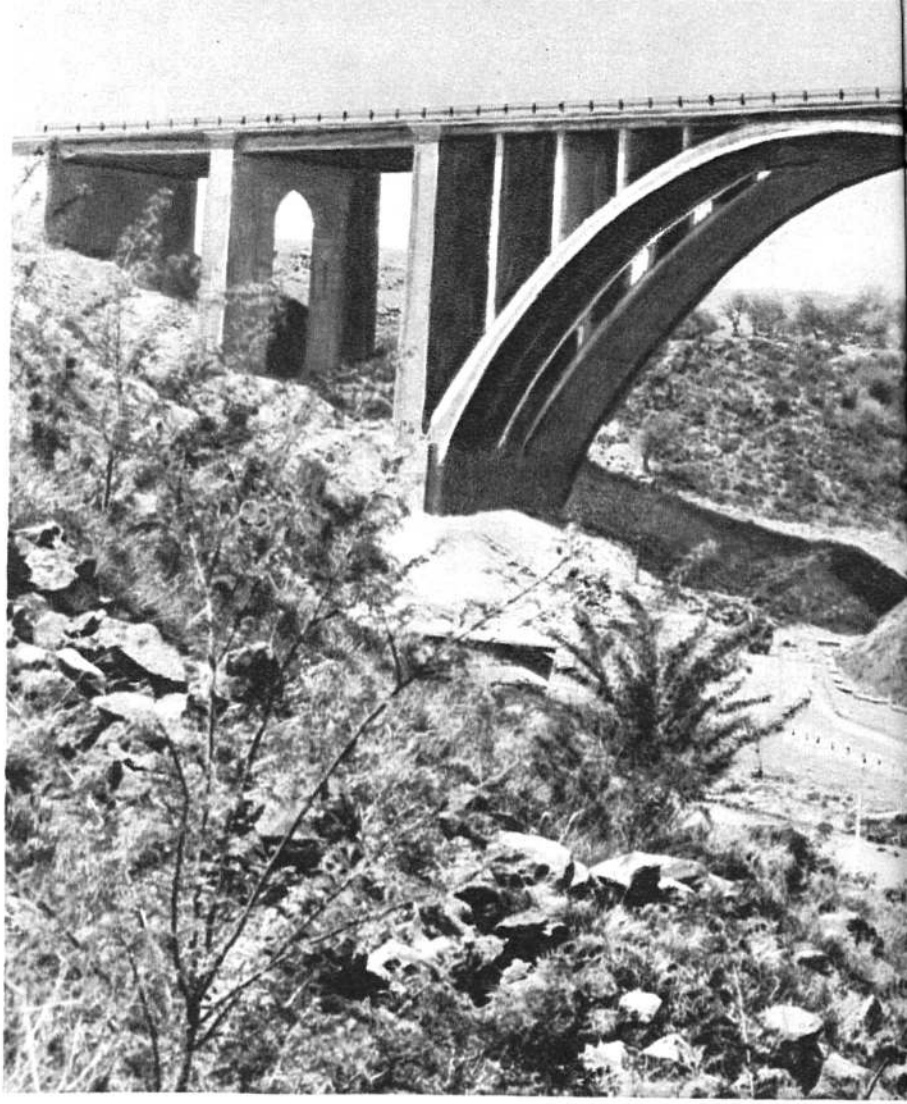


Barekamutyun Street. Offices of the Central Committee of the Armenian Communist Party (architect M. Grigoryan)

Residential buildings in Barekamutyun Street

School in Barekamutyun Street (architect R. Grigoryan)

Nursery at the Clock Factory (architect A. Kanayan)



Bridge over the Hrazdan (engineers V. Pinajyan, N. Slavinsky and architect G. Agababyan)

Refrigerator plant, Orjonikidze Prospekt (architect G. Agababyan)

Construction work is moving ahead fast in other districts of the city too. The Darakend section of the bank of the Hrazdan was once crowded with little tanners' workshops huddling round a small tannery. Now the industrial district which sprang up here twenty years ago has become very extensive and is continuing to grow rapidly. The main thoroughfare of this district, Orjonikidze Prospekt, is one of the notable sights of the city. Though not yet quite finished, it already gives the impression of throbbing industrial life.

The street is lined with enterprises: a shoe factory, the Dzerzhinsky plant, which produces various kinds of consumer goods, a carpet factory, a marble works, a cannery, a motor parts plant, building accessories plants, mullite, potassium dichromate, china, compressor, cable, tobacco, and fermentation plants.

The architecture of the huge refrigerator plant (architect G. Agababyan), the double-hall cinema (architect G. Agababyan), the department store (G. Tamanyan) and other buildings, is also worth noting.

Park railing, Orjonikidze Prospekt (architect G. Tamanyan)

Railings of the Twenty-Six Commissars Park (architect G. Tamanyan)

Department store, Abovyan Street (architects A. Aharonyan, G. Kochar, M. Mazmanyan and O. Markaryan)

Born of the five-year plans, this avenue was built according to the principles of socialist municipal construction, the keynote of which is human welfare. While the factories and plants were being erected, the street was being asphalted and planted with trees; dwelling houses. clinics, crèches, and kindergartens were erected. Squares and avenues were laid out between the factories. In this way considerable parts of the street at once acquired a finished appearance and conformity with the general city plan.

The neighbouring streets are being built at the same rapid pace. At the end of Tamantsy Street a dam 18 metres high will soon be constructed to form a large reservoir. Transport lines will cross the dam and link the city with the Shahumyan district on the right bank; this will complete the wide transport ring round Yerevan.

By way of Orjonikidze Prospekt one can reach the huge synthetic rubber works and the workers' estate attached to it. On Orjonikidze Prospekt one cannot help remembering that the republic in recent years has acquired several completely new branches of industry: electric power, chemical products, electrical machinery, building materials and textiles. Armenia's power capacity has made striking progress. Suffice it to say that its output of electric power has increased 450 times since 1913. This means that in a single day the re-

Abovyan Street, residential buildings in the foreground (architect E. Tigranyan)

Statue of S. Shahumyan

Monument to S. Shahumyan in Shahumyan Square
(architect I. Zholtovsky and sculptor S. Merkurov)

public's power stations produce more electricity than Armenia produced in the whole of 1913. In production of electric power per head of population Soviet Armenia has overtaken such industrially developed capitalist countries as France and Holland and is producing nearly twice as much power per head as Italy and Japan. The Armenian republic now produces twice as much electric power as Turkey, whose territory is twenty-five times the size of Armenia.

Machine-building has acquired an important place in the republic's economy in recent years. Soviet Armenia is now producing complex machines such as transformers, generators, turbines, compressors, electrical measuring instruments, and metal-cutting lathes.

Before the Revolution could Armenia ever have dreamed of exporting products abroad? Now the republic exports hydroturbines, electric motors, cable, pumps, and other industrial products to 22 foreign countries, including the Argentine, Burma, the United Arab Republic, India, Poland and Turkey. The changes that have taken place in the life of the republic have indeed been miraculous.

But let us return along Orjonikidze Prospekt. After passing a short distance down Twenty-Six Commissars Street, we reach Shahumyan Square, which is linked by a broad boulevard with Lenin Square.

In Shahumyan Square there is an interesting monument to Stepan Shahumyan, leader of the famous Baku commissars. The Square where the monument now stands lies in front of the Spandaryan District Soviet and is bordered on one side by the Sevan Hotel (architect N. Buniatov), and on the other by the communal and agricultural banks.

The monument is composed of seven massive rectangular columns on a flat stepped base. The columns are linked by a simply designed cornice. The pedestal for Shahumyan's statue let into the base of the monument is of reddish unpolished granite. The columns are of blue-grey rough-hewn granite. In front there is a flower garden; behind stretches a pool linking the monument with the green boulevard.

The designer of the architectural part of the monument was Academician I. Zholtovsky; the statue was the work of S. Merkurov.

This monument relies for its effect on architectural restraint, its contact with the square and the boulevard, and its heroic proportions. It is an optimistic monument and its purity of line embodies the immortality of the hero and the undying strength of the ideas, for the triumph of which Stepan Shahumyan fought as a Bolshevik.

Statue of K. Abovyan (sculptor S. Stepanyan and architect G. Tamanyan)

The Kanaker Highway (architect M. Grigoryan, sculptor A. Sarksyan and A. Urartu)

The Soviet theme, revolutionary fighters and revolutionary events, occupy a notable place in the monumental sculpture of the city.

Besides the Shahumyan monument, the twenty-six Baku commissars are commemorated in the monument to Meshadi Azizbekov (sculptor A. Sarksyan). It is a granite bust standing on a fairly low pedestal in the centre of a small garden.

In the middle of the garden which rounds off Abovyan Street there is a monument to Khachatur Abovyan, the distinguished Armenian writer and creator of the modern Armenian language. The bronze memorial (sculptor S. Stepanyan, architect G. Tamanyan) portrays a thoughtful young Abovyan with a book in his right hand. It stands on a stone pedestal mounted on four steps.

Not far from the monument rise the artistically designed pillars marking the beginning of the Kanaker highroad. One of them carrying a lamp is decorated with vine leaves and bunches of grapes. Its pedestal is adorned with a high relief portraying a woman with a pitcher (sculptor A. Urartu). On the other pillar there is a stone vase of fruit (designed by architect M. Grigoryan). A broad flight of steps leads up to the highroad.

Below Abovyan garden another garden has been laid out round the building of the observatory. In front of it there is a memorial to the founder of the Komsomol of Armenia Gukas Gukasyan (sculptor S. Stepanyan). On a not very large polished granite pedestal with bas-reliefs devoted to the history of the Armenian Komsomol stands the expressive figure of a youth with a bold open face. He has a rifle over his shoulder and a banner in his hand.

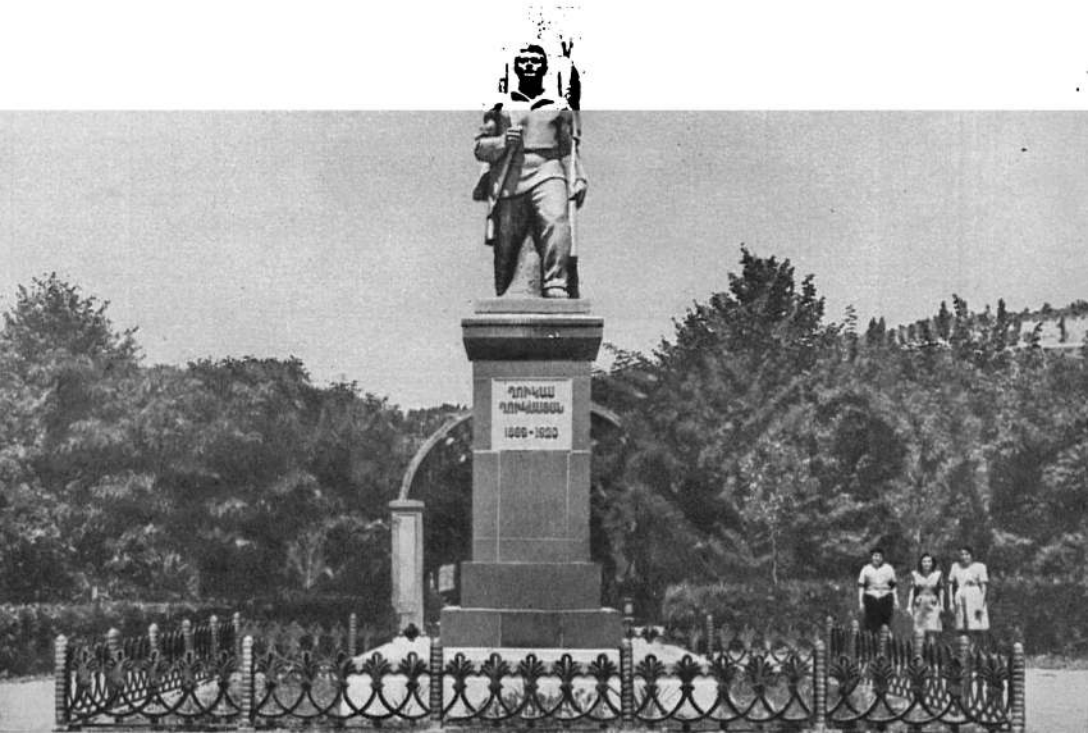
The monument which reminds the young people of the heroic past is situated aptly enough in the heart of the

student quarter at the centre of the city's student activities.

The bronze bust of Nelson Stepanyan, twice Hero of the Soviet Union (sculptor A. Sarksyan and architect G. Agababyan), a valiant son of the Armenian people and a participant in the Second World War, is an interesting monument. It stands in the Kirov children's park.

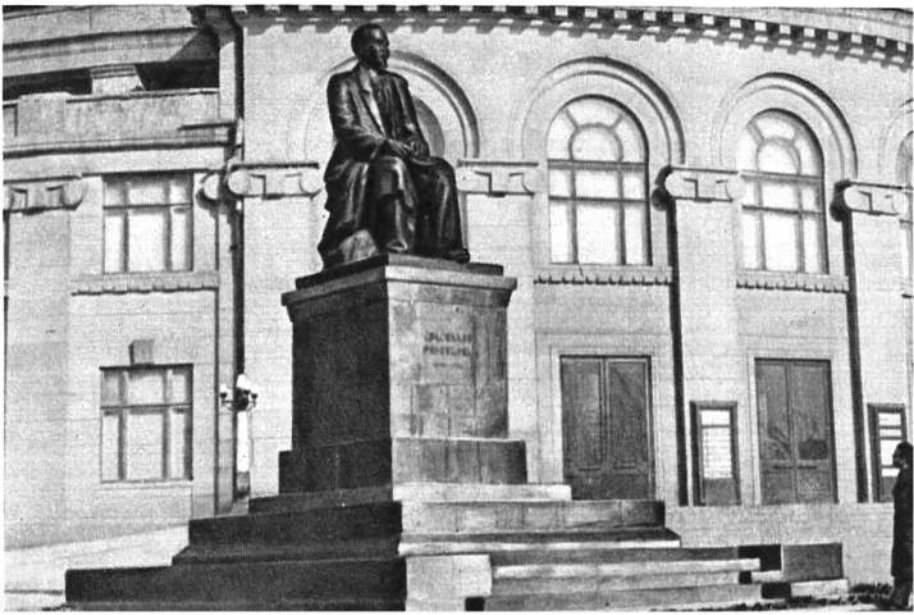
Finally, mention must be made of two monuments recently erected in front of the State Opera House. These are monuments to the classical Armenian writer, Hovhannes Tumanyan (sculptor A. Sarksyan and architect G. Agababyan), and to the composer Alexander Spendiaryan (sculptors A. Sark-

Statue of Gukas Gukasyan (sculptor S. Stepanyan)



Statue of A. Spendiaryan (sculptors A. Sarksyan and G. Chubaryan, architects G. Agababyan and F. Darbinyan)

Statue of O. Tumanyan (sculptor A. Sarksyan and architect G. Agababyan)



Façade of the Dynamo Stadium (architect K. Akopyan)

syan and G. Chubaryan, architects G. Agababyan and F. Darbinyan). Placed on pedestals of similar height, they fit in well with the lay-out of the garden.

The city will soon be graced with new monuments. In front of the Matenadaran there will be a statue to the inventor of the Armenian alphabet Mesrop Mashtots.

In this brief tour of the main buildings of the city one should not fail to visit the Dynamo stadium (architect K. Akopyan), an excellent physical training establishment which has contributed much to the achievements of Armenian sportsmen. Apart from this "health factory," as it is sometimes called, two other stadiums are under construction.

Ten or twenty years ago no one in the world and not even in the Soviet Union had heard of the sportsmen of Armenia,

Stands at the Dynamo Stadium

whose achievements were all but non-existent. But in the Sixteenth Olympic Games at Melbourne in 1956 the sportsmen of Soviet Armenia won four gold medals and surpassed 45 countries in total points gained. The Armenian gymnasts Albert Azaryan and Hrant Shahinyan are world champions. The title of champion of Europe has twice been won by Vladimir Yengibaryan. Armenia's pentathlon team took first place at the U.S.S.R. Games and in 1957 the Yerevan athlete Igor Novikov became pentathlon champion of the world.

A healthy young generation is growing up to build and run the republic.

We have toured the streets of Yerevan and seen its main cultural, industrial, public, and residential buildings. But our

story would be incomplete without a mention of an outwardly quite insignificant-looking little house standing in a shady garden planted by its owner, after whom this street is named.

This is the house of People's Artist of Armenia Martiros Saryan. Visit this house and you will be welcomed by a hospitable host, who in spite of his 79 years is still full of youthful energy and cheerfulness, creative plans and ideas. And when you enter his studio hung with numerous pictures, you will breathe the aroma of the country, its wonderful fruits and flowers. You will see the portraits of noted people in Armenia, such as the world-famous Academician Iosif Orbeli and Tamara Arutyunyan, a factory worker. And finally you will see some unforgettable landscapes of Armenia, the pure colours, azure sky and the sun-drenched earth that endows its sons with such rich gifts. And among these pictures your attention will certainly be attracted by numerous sketches, études and finished views of Ararat, which for the Armenian people symbolizes the great age of their country, its troubled but glorious history, its struggle for the independence and happiness, which have been found only in Soviet times. When he visited Armenia Jorge Amado, the outstanding Brazilian writer, wrote: "In the Caucasus today there has risen a powerful, abundant, cultured and free Armenia, actively participating in the peaceful and happy life of the Soviet peoples. This small country and its splendid people are an example to the world."

Цена 5 руб.